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ABSTRACT

Most people are taught writing as a product rather than as a process. Whether the process is prewriting, writing, and postwriting: or planning, writing, and revising, teachers must be concerned with helping students discover and develop the process that works best for them. Thus it is the writing teacher's responsibility to teach students how to revise. The following procedure for teaching revision may be useful. The procedure includes examining students' revision steps with the whole class, illustrating what professional writers have said about revision while emphasizing that revision is an ongoing process, discussing the role of editing in revision (they are not the same), having the class revise a draft written by the teacher and discussing the revisions, and meeting individually with students to discuss revisions of their own drafts. Other suggestions for teaching revision include not assigning a grade to a student paper until the revisions are acceptable, tape recording comments on papers for each student to listen to, having students write papers with poor writing style to teach them how not to write, and writing personal comments when grading a student paper. (HTH)

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REVISION IN TEN STEPS

Hank Swieterman

HAD I NOT BEEN COMPELLED TO READ COOPER AND ODELL'S WORK, RESEARCH ON COMPOSING, AND HAD I NOT SPENT A WEEK AT FINDLAY COLLEGE RESEARCHING AND STUDYING THE WRITING PROCESS, I WOULD STILL BE TEACHING WRITING AS A PRODUCT RATHER THAN A PROCESS.

MOST OF US HAVE LEARNED ABOUT WRITING THROUGH TRIAL AND ERROR, FOR MOST OF US ARE PRODUCTS OF ASSIGNED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS. WE WERE USUALLY GIVEN AN ASSIGNMENT, AND WE USUALLY DELIVERED A PRODUCT ON THE ASSIGNED DAY. IF WE WERE LUCKY, OUR PAPERS WERE RETURNED WITH A FEW APPROPRIATE COMMENTS LIKE: INTERESTING, INCOHERENT, LACKS DEVELOPMENT, OR MAYBE WELL DONE AND, OF COURSE, A GRADE. AND SO CONSEQUENTLY WHEN WE BECAME ENGLISH TEACHERS, WE MADE SIMILAR ASSIGNMENTS AND GAVE SIMILAR REMARKS AND GRADES TO OUR STUDENTS. PROBABLY ALL OF US HAVE EXPERIENCED SOME TEACHER ALONG THE WAY WHO GAVE TWO GRADES: ONE FOR CONTENT, AND ONE FOR USAGE AND MECHANICS. IF WE LIKED THAT SYSTEM OF EVALUATION, WE ADOPTED THIS IN OUR TEACHING STUDENTS HOW TO WRITE. AND SO THE CIRCLE CONTINUES.

AFTER RETURNING PAPERS I SAW STUDENTS DO THIS (CRUMPLE UP A PIECE OF PAPER AND THROW IT AWAY) I FELT LIKE SCREAMING "HEY, I SPENT SOME TIME ON THAT!" WHEN I SAW STUDENTS DO THIS, I REALIZED THAT I HAD NOT MADE THE ASSIGNMENT A LEARNING PROCESS ABOUT WRITING. MY WRITING ASSIGNMENTS WERE JUST THAT--ASSIGNMENTS ABOUT SOME ASPECT OF LITERATURE OR SOME FAVORITE TOPIC LIKE HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER AND SO FORTH. AND REALLY STUDENTS PROVED, AS I HAD DONE, THAT THEY COULD PUT WORDS ON PAPER, AND THE BETTER

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WRITERS, WHO GOD KNOWS HOW, DIDN'T AWKWARD CONSTRUCT, RUN-ON, FRAGMENT NOR INCOHERE AS MUCH AS THE STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED THE C AND BELOW.

THUS WRITING FOR THE MOST PART, WAS TAUGHT AS A PRODUCT RATHER THAN A PROCESS. IT HAS BEEN SO SINCE THE WRITING PROCESS HAS BEEN FOREIGN TO MOST ENGLISH TEACHERS. HOWEVER, ATTENDING WORKSHOPS SUCH AS THE ONE AT FINDLAY COLLEGE CAN MAKE ONE MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND MORE COMPETENT IN TEACHING THE WRITING PROCESS. THAT WORKSHOP HAS CAUSED ME TO READ EVERYTHING I CAN ON THE WRITING PROCESS. THIS RESEARCH HAS ENABLED ME TO DO A BETTER JOB IN TEACHING STUDENTS THE PROCESS OF WRITING, AND IT IS TO THE REVISION PROCESS THAT I WISH TO FOCUS ON.

"WRITING IS NOT JUST WORDS ON PAPER. IT IS OVERCOMING INHIBITIONS; GETTING STARTED; MATCHING WORDS TO THOUGHTS; FEELINGS AND THINKING."¹ THIS IS A QUOTE FROM IRMSCHER'S TEACHING EXPOSITORY WRITING. ROHMAN SAYS, "WRITING IS A PROCESS AND NOT A PRODUCT. WHETHER WE CHOOSE TO CATEGORIZE THIS PROCESS INTO PRE-WRITING, WRITING, AND POSTWRITING; OR PLANNING, WRITING, AND REVISING, IF WE ARE TO TEACH "WRITING" THEN WE MUST BE CONCERNED WITH HELPING STUDENTS DISCOVER AND DEVELOP THAT PROCESS WHICH WORKS WELL FOR THEM."²

I AGREE WITH SOMMERS WHEN SHE WROTE: "IT IS NOT THAT STUDENTS UNWILLINGLY REVISE, BUT RATHER NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO WHEN THEY ARE TOLD TO REVISE..."³ THUS IT IS THE WRITING TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH STUDENTS HOW TO REVISE, JUST AS IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR A COACH TO TEACH AN ATHLETE THE PROPER TECHNIQUES OF A SPORT.

REVISION IS A PAINFUL PROCESS, BUT IT MUST BE TAUGHT IF STUDENTS ARE TO WRITE WELL. WE EXCUSE OUR STUDENTS FROM THIS PAINFUL PROCESS BECAUSE WE TRY TO MAKE WRITING AS PLEASANT AND AS EASY AS POSSIBLE. AND YET AS MURRAY STATES NOT ONE OF US WOULD EXCUSE A FOOTBALL PLAYER FROM CALISTHENICS BECAUSE IT IS PAINFUL. I BELIEVE THE FAULT OF THIS LIES WITH TEACHERS' MISCONCEPTIONS OF WHAT REVISION IS. AS SOMMERS SAYS: "REVISION IS USUALLY EQUATED WITH CLEANLINESS--TO REVISE, TO GROOM, TO POLISH, TO TIDY-UP ONE'S WRITING."⁴ WHEN ASKED TO REVISE, MOST STUDENTS RETURN THEM WITH MINOR CHANGES IN SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND CORRECTIONS IN PUNCTUATION, USAGE AND SO FORTH. IN DOING THESE TWO THINGS, THE STUDENT FEELS HE HAS REVISED, AND ALL HE HAS DONE IS CLEANED HIS PAPER BY A REWORDING AND CORRECTING BASIC ERRORS. A GOOD BASEBALL COACH WOULD NOT JUST ASSIGN BATTING PRACTICE; HE TEACHES THE ATHLETE THE PROPER STANCE AND SO FORTH. THE COACH HAS A SYSTEM HE USES IN TEACHING THIS SKILL. IF REVISION IS A SKILL, THEN IT SHOULD BE ABLE TO BE TAUGHT IN A STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE. THE FOLLOWING IS A PROCEDURE I HAVE FOUND USEFUL IN TEACHING REVISION.

1. HAVE STUDENTS WRITE A SHORT PAPER ON SOME TOPIC OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING. INSTRUCT THEM TO REVISE THEIR WORK BEFORE WRITING THEIR FINAL DRAFT. I PREFER NOT TO TELL THEM WHAT I BELIEVE REVISION IS AND WHAT THEY SHOULD DO WHEN THEY REVISE. I THINK THIS COMPELS THE STUDENT TO DISCOVER ON HIS OWN THE PROCESS OF REVISION. I ALSO ASK THEM TO TURN IN ALL DRAFTS THEY USED IN ATTAINING THIS FINAL PRODUCT. I REALIZE TIME IS PRECIOUS, BUT IT WOULD BE GOOD IF THE TEACHER ALSO DID THE ASSIGNMENT.

2. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT CLASS, ASK STUDENTS WHAT THEY DID IN REVISING THEIR PAPERS. WRITE THEIR COMMENTS ON A CHALKBOARD OR AN OVERHEAD PROJECTOR.

3. NOW WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT PROFESSIONAL WRITERS HAVE DONE AND SAID ABOUT REVISION. SOME POSSIBLE EXAMPLES MIGHT BE, "WRITING HAS GOT TO BE

AN ACT OF DISCOVERY ... I WRITE TO FIND OUT WHAT I'M THINKING ABOUT," (EDWARD ALBEE). WRITING AND REWRITING ARE A CONSTANT SEARCH FOR WHAT ONE IS SAYING" (JOHN UPDIKE). HOPEFULLY, STUDENTS WILL SEE THE DIFFERENCE OF THE PROFESSIONAL THOUGHT OF REVISION FROM THEIR OWN.

4. DEFINE REVISION. SOMMERS DEFINES REVISION AS:

IT IS A MATTER OF LOOKING AT THE KERNEL OF WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN, THE CONTENT, AND THEN THINKING ABOUT IT, RESPONDING TO IT, MAKING DECISIONS, AND ACTUALLY RESTRUCTURING.

THE EFFECTIVE WRITER KNOWS WRITING IS REWRITING...THE AMATEUR BELIEVES THE WRITER IS THE PERSON WHO CAN SIT DOWN AND RIP OFF AN ESSAY OR A REPORT...REWRITING IS WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE A WRITER, FOR IT IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE PROCESS OF WRITING. IT IS THE WAY YOU FIT IDEAS INTO LANGUAGE.

5. AT THIS POINT, IT WOULD BE WISE TO COMMENT ON THE ROLE OF EDITING IN REVISION. EDITING IS A SMALL PART OF THE REVISION PROCESS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IT BE TAUGHT AS SUCH, FOR MOST STUDENTS EQUATE EDITING WITH REVISION.

6. STUDENTS SHOULD NOW BREAK INTO GROUPS OF NO MORE THAN FOUR TO REVISE THE TEACHER'S DRAFT WHICH HE HAS DUPLICATED FOR THEM. IF YOU ARE AFRAID TO HAVE STUDENTS REVISE YOUR PAPER, A PAPER IN WHICH YOU COULD DELIBERATELY BE ILLOGICAL, INCOHERENT, OUT OF CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, AND SO FORTH, USE A STUDENT'S PAPER TO ILLUSTRATE. IF YOU PREFER NOT TO DO THIS, MAYBE SOMETHING LIKE A "NICE MARCH DAY" (HANDOUT A) OR "THE FIRST TIME I DEVELOPED COLOR FILM" (HANDOUT B). HOWEVER, USING THE TEACHER'S DRAFT HAS A HUMANIZING EFFECT, AND IT ILLUSTRATES THAT EVEN ENGLISH TEACHERS HAVE TO REVISE. IN DOING THEIR REVISIONS, INSTRUCT THE GROUPS TO CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH THE LOGIC, FOCUS OF THE PAPER, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE ASSIGNMENT. A LIST OF QUESTIONS SUCH AS GEBHARDT⁴ PROPOSES MIGHT AID THE STUDENTS IN MAKING REVISIONS (HANDOUT C).

7. ONCE THE TASK OF REVISIONS BY THE STUDENTS HAS BEEN EXHAUSTED, STUDENTS SHOULD EXPLAIN THEIR REVISIONS TO THE REST OF THE CLASS. THE TEACHER SHOULD NOTE SUCH REVISIONS ON A TRANSPARENCY OR CHALKBOARD FOR ALL STUDENTS TO SEE.

8. A NEW DRAFT INCORPORATING THESE REVISIONS COULD BE MADE AND DUPLICATED FOR THE STUDENTS TO SEE. IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT PROFESSIONAL WRITERS CONTINUALLY REVISE BEFORE ARRIVING AT THEIR FINAL PRODUCT. AS SOMMERS SAYS: REVISION IS AN ONGOING PROCESS.

9. NOW STUDENTS ARE READY TO REVISE THEIR OWN PAPERS WITH, POSSIBLY, THE AID OF A FRIEND.

10. WHEN THE STUDENT FEELS HE HAS COMPLETED THE NECESSARY REVISIONS, THE TEACHER SHOULD THEN HAVE A THREE TO FIVE MINUTE MEETING MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL REVISIONS. THE STUDENT IS NOW READY TO WRITE HIS FINAL DRAFT.

MURRAY INDICATES THAT A WRITING TEACHER MUST PREPARE HIS STUDENTS FOR THE FINAL DRAFT THE WAY A COACH PREPARES HIS TEAM FOR THE GAME. WITH THIS IN MIND, THE TEACHER SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON MAJOR PROBLEMS, SOLVING THEM ONE AT A TIME. THE GOAL OF BOTH THE COACH AND THE TEACHER IS TO GET THE INDIVIDUAL TO SEE HIS OWN PROBLEMS AND TO SOLVE THEM ON HIS OWN, FOR AS MURRAY SAYS, "WRITING IS BASICALLY A SELF-TAUGHT SKILL PRODUCED MAINLY BY REWRITING."

WRITING TEACHERS MUST INSIST THAT STUDENTS REVISE. STUDENTS DO BELIEVE I AM SERIOUS ABOUT THEIR REVISING WHEN I RETURN PAPERS WITHOUT A GRADE UNTIL I AM SATISFIED WITH THEIR PRODUCT. THE PRESENT RECORD IN MY CLASSES FOR A PAPER RETURNED WITHOUT A GRADE HAS BEEN NINE TIMES. THIS SEMESTER ONE OF MY STUDENTS REMARKED, "HE (MEANING THE TEACHER) MAKES ME WRITE A BOOK FOR A LOUSY TWO-PAGE PAPER." IT TAKES TIME AND PATIENCE. IN COACHING, I HAVE ATHLETES REPEAT THE DRILL UNTIL I AM SATISFIED WITH

THEIR EXECUTION, AND I FEEL IF ENGLISH TEACHERS BELIEVE THAT WRITING IS NOT JUST WORDS ON PAPER THEN WE HAVE TO INSIST ON SOME MINIMUM STANDARDS OR PERFORMANCE FROM STUDENTS' WRITING. I DO FEEL THAT WRITING TEACHERS DO NEED TO TEACH THE REVISION PROCESS NOT JUST EDITING. IT IS EASIER TO RETURN STUDENTS' PAPERS WITH A FEW COMMENTS AND A GRADE, BUT IF THE TEACHER DOES THIS, STUDENTS WILL NEVER LEARN TO KNOW WHAT WRITING REALLY IS. STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW THAT THE TEACHER WILL NOT ACCEPT JUST WORDS ON PAPER AND THAT THE TEACHER REALLY DOES NOT APPRECIATE HAVING TO READ THEIR PAPERS FOUR AND FIVE TIMES.

IF BY THE END OF THE COURSE, THE TEACHER HAS TAUGHT STUDENTS TO REVISE ON THEIR OWN, THEN STUDENTS WILL BEGIN TO WRITE. UNTIL TEACHERS GET STUDENTS TO REVISE PROPERLY, STUDENTS WILL NEVER DEVELOP THEIR WRITING ABILITY ANY MORE THAN AN ATHLETE WILL BE A STARTER ON THE TEAM IF HE NEVER LEARNS THE MOVES ON HIS OWN. IT IS THE WRITING TEACHER'S TASK TO SHOW STUDENTS HOW TO WRITE, AND THIS CAN ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE SWEAT OF REVISION. THIS PROCESS IS ESSENTIAL FOR ANY TYPE OF WRITING.

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. AFTER THE FIRST NINE WEEKS, ANY PAPER THAT NEEDS TO BE REVISED WILL NOT EARN A GRADE ABOVE A C.
2. RECORD YOUR COMMENTS ABOUT EACH STUDENT'S PAPER IS APPRECIATED BY STUDENTS. (THIS COULD BE DONE PERIODICALLY.) BE SURE TO WRITE THE FOOTAGE NUMBERS ON THEIR PAPERS. WITH A SET OF EAR PHONES, STUDENTS CAN LISTEN TO THE COMMENTS IN CLASS WHILE YOU HAVE THEM WORKING ON ANOTHER ASSIGNMENT.

3. THE FOLLOWING IS AN IDEA I GOT FROM DOCTOR WHISSEN AT WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY IN HIS COURSE THE STUDY OF WRITING. THE COURSE MIGHT HAVE BEEN MORE APPROPRIATELY ENTITLED: LEARNING HOW NOT TO WRITE IN LEARNING TO WRITE. A GOOD RESOURCE SUPPORTING THIS POINT OF VIEW IS RICHARD A. LANHAM'S BOOK, STYLE AN ANTI-TEXTBOOK (YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS) FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU WANT STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT ABSTRACTITIS, JARGON, CLICHES, VAGUENESS ARE, HAVE THEM TO WRITE EXAMPLES IN WHICH THEY ARE VAGUE, ABSTRACT AND SO FORTH. (SEE HANDOUT TORTURES OF LANGUAGE.) AFTER DOING SUCH EXERCISES, STUDENTS WILL KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN WHEN YOU TELL THEM THEIR WRITING IS PADDED, ABSTRACT OR VAGUE. I HAVE FOUND THAT STUDENTS ENJOY DOING THESE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS AND READING THEM TO THE CLASS. A GOOD REINFORCEMENT EXERCISE IS TO HAVE STUDENTS FIND EXAMPLES OF THESE TORTURES IN NEWSPAPERS OR MAGAZINES.

4. A COVER PAGE HELPS AS A CHECK LIST FOR THE STUDENTS AND ADDS ORGANIZATION IN EVALUATING STUDENTS' PAPERS. I USUALLY BEGIN THE COURSE CENTERING ON ONE ELEMENT OF WRITING AND ADD TO THIS LIST AS WE PROGRESS. THE HANDOUT ENTITLED "COVER PAGE" IS AN EXAMPLE OF ONE I USE FOR THE CREATIVE WRITING CLASSES. I'M SURE YOU COULD ADD TO THIS LIST. I TRY TO KEEP IT SIMPLE AND GET THE STUDENTS TO DO A FEW THINGS WELL.

5. I FEEL PERSONAL COMMENTS ARE A MUST. A TEACHER'S COMMENTS ABOUT THE PAPER'S STYLE, USAGE, AND ORGANIZATION ARE IMPORTANT, AND THESE COMMENTS ARE AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO TELL A STUDENT IF HE IS PROGRESSING. THESE COMMENTS CAN MAKE STUDENTS REALLY WANT TO WRITE. I FEEL YOU EITHER WIN OR LOSE THEM BY YOUR COMMENTS. I JUST ABHOR TEACHERS WHO SIMPLY GRADE A PAPER AND FAIL TO EXPLAIN THE GRADE TO THE STUDENT. I OFTEN WONDER IF THEIR TEACHERS HAVE REALLY READ THE STUDENTS' WORK.

6. EACH STUDENT HAS A FOLDER WITH HIS NAME ON IN WHICH HE KEEPS ALL OF HIS WORK. THIS ALLOWS ME TO GO BACK AND REVIEW HIS WRITING AND TO JUDGE HOW MUCH IF ANY PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE. I BELIEVE PROGRESS TO BE THE REAL SCALE FOR ANY LEARNING.

7. VOLUME WRITING ASSIGNMENTS ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO WRITE ON THEIR OWN. THIS SUPPORTS WILLIAM STRONG'S CONCEPT ABOUT WRITING: "IF OUR STUDENTS WRITE ONLY WHAT WE HAVE TIME TO READ, THEY WILL NEVER LEARN HOW TO WRITE."

IN CONCLUSION, IF ENGLISH TEACHERS ARE GOING TO TEACH WRITING, THEN THEY MUST TEACH THE PROCESS OF WRITING AND THE HEART OF ALL GOOD WRITING IS IN REVISION. IT IS, THEREFORE, THE JOB OF ALL ENGLISH TEACHERS TO BE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THIS PROCESS, JUST AS IT IS FOR THE COACH TO BE INFORMED OF THE LATEST TRAINING METHODS IF HE IS TO BE A WINNER. ENGLISH TEACHERS WILL WIN THE WRITING BATTLE WITH THEIR STUDENTS IF THEY TEACH REVISION.

NOTES

¹WILLIAM F. IRMSCHER, TEACHING EXPOSITORY WRITING (NEW YORK: HOLDT, 1979), P. 102.

²D. GORDON ROHMAN, "PRE-WRITING," COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION, 16 (MAY, 1965), 106-112.

³DONALD M. MURRAY, A WRITER TEACHES WRITING (BOSTON: HOUGHTON MIFFLIN, 1968), P. 72.

⁴RICHARD GEBHART, "IMAGINATION AND DISCIPLINE IN THE WRITING CLASS" THE ENGLISH JOURNAL, 66:9 (DEC. 1977), P. 32.

HANDOUTS

TEN STEPS IN TEACHING REVISION

1. Students write a short paper with a definite purpose in mind.
2. What students think revision is.
3. What the professionals say.
4. Sommer's definition of revision:

It is a matter of looking at the kernel of what I have written, the content, and then thinking about it, responding to it, making decisions, and actually restructuring.

The effective writer knows writing is rewriting.
. . .The Amateur believes the writer is the person who can sit down and rip off an essay or a report.
. . .Rewriting is what you do when you are a writer, for it is an essential part of the process of writing. It is the way you fit ideas into language.

5. Explain the role of editing in revision.
6. Group work.
7. Make a list of revisions which the students felt necessary from their group work. Write these ideas for revision on the board or transparency.
8. Have each group rewrite the sample incorporating the necessary revisions.
9. Have students revise their own papers applying their knowledge of revision.
10. Conference with the teacher.

Last summer I went to my nephew's wedding. I took my camera along, and shot some color pictures of the wedding. I decided I would develop the film myself when I got home.

When I did get home I got my equipment together. I also read the instructions with the chemicals. I was pretty nervous and I was pretty worried about ruining the film.

It was difficult to get the film onto the reel and into the tank, but I managed to do it. And then I turned on the lights, which made me feel better.

When I finished putting the film into the tank, I mixed the chemicals. I was still pretty nervous and I was worried about the step which called for a very demanding time and temperature. I had never been that careful before.

But I went ahead with the process anyway. I put the chemicals in some hot water, and watched the temperature with a thermometer. When I got the chemicals to the right temperature, I poured one of them into the tank. Then I put the tank on a machine which rotated the tank automatically.

I was still pretty nervous as I did this, but eventually I began feeling calmer. I began gaining confidence, I'm not sure why. I felt a little awkward watching the tank being rotated. After awhile it didn't bother me so much.

I finally realized that the other steps were prettysimilar to other processes I was used to. So I felt less nervous about those steps and I completed the process in another fifteen minutes.

When I took the film from the reel, I was pretty happy. The negatives looked pretty good, and I thought I had succeeded. I told myself that I would probably be able to do other jobs in photography that I had been afraid to try. So even though I started out pretty shaky, I ended up developing my first roll of color film feeling pretty good.

On a July weekend last summer, I traveled to Chicago for my nephew's wedding. I took my camera along, and shot some color pictures of the wedding. I decided that I would develop the film myself when I got home.

When I got home I gathered my equipment together and read the instructions packed with the Unicolor K-2 chemicals I was going to use. I was pretty nervous about doing the developing because even though I had developed Black and white film before, I had never developed color film. I was worried that I might ruin the film and my relatives would be upset.

I was so nervous that my hands were sweating and that made it difficult to get the film onto the reel I would be using to develop the film. But I finally managed to get the film onto the reel and into a light tight tank so that I could turn on the lights again.

When I had finished putting the film into the tank, I carefully mixed the chemicals according to the instructions in the box. I was still pretty anxious about the whole process, especially since one of the steps called for a very exact temperature and time. Since I had never been that careful about time and temperature before, I was pretty uptight.

But I went ahead with the process anyway. I put the medicine bottles full of chemicals in some hot water to bring them up to the correct temperature. I watched the temperature with a thermometer, and when the right temperature was reached, I poured the developer into the tank. Then I put the tank on a machine which automatically rotates the tank.

I was still pretty nervous as I did this, but eventually I began feeling calmer. I began gaining confidence in what I was doing, I'm not sure why. I felt a little awkward watching the tank being rotated, but after awhile it didn't bother me so much.

I finally realized that the other steps in the process were pretty similar to the black and white processing steps I was used to. So I felt less nervous about those steps and I was able to complete the process in another fifteen minutes.

When I took the film from the reel, I was pretty happy. The negatives looked pretty good, and I thought I had succeeded in doing the job. I told myself I would probably be able to do other jobs in photography that I had been afraid to try. So even though I started out pretty shaky, I ended up developing my first roll of color film feeling pretty good.

Getting Positive About Negatives

I had listened to the radio commercial a hundred times: little "Chrissie" cutely extolling the virtues of "K-Mart's goof-proof picture perfect policy." And I had followed, with a half-smile, the adventures of Morton and Nancy, the girl at the Fotomat stand. It all seemed so easy--just push the shutter a few times, give the little can of film to someone else for a few days and presto! machine-perfect prints. I even knew that Kodak, the great yellow father in Rochester, New York, had sanctioned the practice in its first advertisements 70 years ago: "You push the button, we do the rest." Something in me was bucking the long-standing flood of advertising; I wanted to do "the rest."

I confessed my urge to my brother-in-law Tony when we met last summer at our nephew's wedding. He seemed to be an appropriate ear; an older, more accomplished photographer than me, he had that aura of Wisdom about him, probably a carryover from the four years he spent in a seminary long ago. In his usual calm, laconic way, he said, simply, "Follow me." He led me onto a Burlington commuter train and into East Cameras in the dark heart of downtown Chicago. There he looked around for a few minutes, then nudged me into a room marked "darkroom supplies." He pointed to a small orange and white box of Unicolor K-2 chemicals and said, "Buy that." Like a penitent in a hurry to be absolved or a photo-junkie needing a fix, I swapped the salesman a \$20 bill for the box which read: "May be used to process Kodacolor II, Vericolor II, Fujicolor and other Process C-41 negative films."

Tony never said another word about my urge or about using the orange and white box. But I knew I entered my darkroom a week after. I had taken pictures at the wedding, that a family challenge had been tossed down. Without having the courtesy to consult me, Tony's impish four-year old blithely announced to the crowd, "Uncle Bob's gonna make us some color pictures, and he's gonna do it all by himself."

Like a record stuck in a groove, those words echoed in my mind on a hot July night as I tried to father my equipment, and the wits, I needed to do the job, all by myself. Fortunately I had acquired a thermometer, a film tank and all the other paraphernalia I needed and I knew the equipment was trustworthy. And I thought I could rely on the instructions packed with the chemicals, which I had read at least six times.

I was less certain about my nerves. I knew it was hot, but I thought it was odd that my palms were sweating. I even began fantasizing that the ventilating fan in the corner was slowly but surely sucking my courage out of the room. I imagined myself botching the processing and a chorus of voices: four year old Daniel, "you used to be my favorite uncle"; my wife, "how come you never botch anything for your relatives"; and even the professional photographer who shot the wedding sneering, "you're really a rank amateur".

Jeff, my four year-old, snapped me out of my reverie. "Daddy, can you show me how to do your film?" It was another challenge, but one I felt more comfortable with. I knew I wanted to teach him, someday, what I had learned. I patted him on the head with my damp palm and said, "Sure. Can you give me a few minutes to try it myself?" Smiling, he trotted out of the darkroom.

The perspiration on my hands made the film sticky and hard to get on the plastic reel used in developing. But after ten minutes in total darkness, worrying about crinkling the pressure-sensitive film, I finally cajoled the film onto the reel and into the light-tight developing tank. Relieved, I blessed the light as I turned it on. I carefully measured the chemicals, nervously checking and rechecking the instruction sheet.

In bold print, so that no doubt remained, the instructions announced: "DEVELOPER, 100° $\frac{1}{2}$ °, 3½ MINUTES, TIME CRITICAL." "Unreasonable," I thought. I had never monitored temperature or time that closely, even when I was being very careful with the developing of black and white film. No wonder Morton took his film to Fotomat. But I had too much invested, in time, money, and personal integrity, to stop. I put the brown medicine bottle full of developer into a foam cooler filled with steaming water. The needle on

the dial-thermometer, jiggling in unison with my trumbling had, moved slowly to the mark. When it reached 100°, I quickly poured this developer into the tank, almost spilling it in my quaking haste. The tank I placed on an electric motor base; with the flip of a switch the base automatically rotated the tank and agitated the chemicals inside.

I fidgeted. I wrung my hands; I scratched my head; I reread the instructions for the eighteenth time. It seemed unfair that the machine was rotating the tank automatically, leaving me no activity to drain my nervous energy. But slowly the rhythmic whrrrrr of the motor impressed itself on me and I began feeling that I was in control. The nineteenth time I read the instructions I realized the remaining steps were like the processing of black and white that I was used to, and the time and temperature requirements were not as demanding as the first step. My palms stopped sweating. I stopped scratching my head. I put my hands on my hips and nodded to myself, "I think I've got it." The 3½ minutes were critical, for in them I felt I had passed a test.

With renewed confidence I calmly carried out the three remaining steps in about fifteen minutes. In anticipation I held my breath as I uncapped the tank and gently unrolled the film from the reel. They looked just like examples of properly developed color negatives I had seen in books and photo magazines. From within the orange haze that is part of all color negative films, my nephew and his bride were smiling at me.

Elated, I realized I need never again fear photo processes, even when they demanded even more critical controls over time and temperature. I knew I could someday teach Jeff how to do what I had just been through. An urge had been satisfied, a family challenge met. Tony still pushes the button, but now he leaves the rest to me.

--Robert A. Rennert
Findlay College

Revision Checklist

Does the writer seem to have a genuine interest in the subject and a good grasp of the subject?

Does the paper seem to be written for a real audience? Would this audience be interested in reading the paper?

Is there a clearly stated main idea that is limited, significant, original, and appropriate to the assignment?

Is there a clear topic sentence in each paragraph?

Is there a clear relationship between each topic sentence and the main point?

Does the opening introduce the main point, a number of more specific sub-points of the thesis, and the general approach that the paper will take in presenting these sub-points?

When they appear later in the paper, are the sub-points of the thesis clearly stated and do they come in the same order in which they were introduced?

Is the topic sentence of each paragraph developed with specific evidence?

Is each sub-point of the thesis supported by at least a full paragraph?

Are the language and examples appropriate to the audience and purpose of the paper?

Is there a good mixture of sentences that are short and long, simple and complex?

Is there a good variety of colorful and active verbs?

Does the paper avoid trite, clumsy, and wordy expressions?

Is proper credit given when ideas and words of others are used?

Richard Gebhardt, "Imagination and Discipline in the Writing Class," The English Journal, 66: 9, (Dec. 1977).

Torture of the Language

1. Abstractitis
2. Ambiguity
3. Euphemism
4. Hyperbole
5. Jargon
6. Mixed Metaphore
7. Cliches
8. Padding
9. Pun
10. Variationism

Cover Page

Name _____

Date _____

- ___ originality, fresh approach or its unusualness
- ___ word choice, use a thesaurus, avoid label words, use precise-distinctive words, avoid trite vague expressions.
- ___ details, overall impression or effect, describe the situation don't tell the reader.
- ___ sentence variety, compact sentence, avoid stringy and choppy sentences.
- ___ depth on the subject, specific information
- ___ sentence coherence or ease of following the idea
- ___ How ambitious is the paper? Have you attempted something difficult or played it safe?
- ___ How well you have fulfilled the spirit of the assignment.

Comments:

Standard Procedures: It's not that these procedures make you a better writer. They make my job a little easier.

1. Use 8½ X 11 paper-skip every other line and written in blue or black ink. No frayed edges.
2. Final product on top. I expect to see everything you did to arrive at the final product.
3. You will lose three points for each misspelling, usage error, (too, its) and crossout after the first one of any combination. In other words a misspelling and a cross out on the same page is -3 points.
4. Check your handbook for punctuation, pp. 10-34. Important to study these sections.
5. 3 points off each day it is late.